WHEN THE UNITED STATES ARMY INVADED MEXICO BACK IN 1846

History That Is Not Likely to Repeat Itself if Pursuit of Villa Extends to Active Intervention—Conditions Then and Now Are Far From Being Identical—Texas a Source of Constant Trouble Previous to the War With Mexico

Washington.—It is seventy years since the start of the Mexican war of 1846-7. History is not going to repeat itself this year, whether there is intervention or not, for conditions are far from being identical. Even if war is declared there will scarcely be a basis for comparison between the coming conflict and that of nearly three-quarters of a century back.

Rightly or wrongly, the war of the '40s has been called one of conquest. By the terms of settlement the United States increased its area one-third. There is no disputed territory over which to fight now, no Texas question, no thought of annexing any land.

But students of history, forever searching for analogous situations, need not despair. Mexico for many years before the war was as troublous and upset, as uncongenial a neighbor as she has been in recent years. She witnessed the meteoric rise of a dictator, the sudden collapse of his power and finally his exile. She saw uprisings and embryonic revolutions without number, each leaving her weaker than before.

Unofficial diplomatists were sent to Mexico long before the days of John Lind and William Bayard Hale. Nor is a watchful waiting policy on the part of the United States a new thing. As early as 1817, when the propriety of recognizing the independence of the former Spanish colony in Mexico was being discussed, Richard Rush, then President Monroe's secretary of state, said in a state paper:

Maintained Strict Neutrality.

"It seems to be incumbent on the United States to watch the movement (for freedom in Mexico) in its subsequent steps with particular attention, with a view to pursue such course as a just regard for all those considerations which they are bound to respect may dictate."

In message after message Monroe reiterated his determination to maintain strict neutrality and to recognize the independence of the Spanish colonies when, but only when, the fact of independence was convincingly established. Not until 1822 did the United States send a minister to the capital of the new government.

For twenty years before the war Texas had been a source of almost constant trouble. This vast domain had been included in the Louisiana purchase, but the United States yielded its claim in a treaty with Spain in order to obtain the whole of Florida. Texas had been settled largely by Southerners and it was inevitable that the slavery question should come to the fore.

As a province Texas was subjected to the hazards of an ill defined and tributary jurisdiction by military officers, to rule by a government which was utterly out of touch with the wants and necessities of her people. Finally the residents formed a new constitution and in 1836 the great Southwestern territory seceded from Mexico.

The attitude of the United States toward Mexico with relation to Texas was for a long time exactly what it had been toward Spain with regard to the Mexican states. Jackson was known to sympathize with the Texas insurgents, but a historian records that he was restrained from taking drastic action by an honorable sense of what the international obligations of the United States demanded.

Despite his well earned reputation as a belligerent some of Jackson's messages read as if they had been written in 1915 or even so recently as early in the present year. In one in which he called attention to claims long held against Mexico by this government for property seized and bodily injuries inflicted he said:

Acted With Forbearance.

"I trust, however, by tempering firmness with courtesy and acting with great forbearance upon every incident that has occurred or that may happen, to do and to obtain justice, and thus avoid the necessity of again bringing this subject to the view of congress."

Two months later (February 6, 1837) he wrote:

"The length of time since some of the injuries have been committed, the repeated and unavailing applications for redress, the wanton character of some of the outrages upon the property and persons of our citizens, upon the officers and flag of the United States, independent of recent insults to this government and people by the late extraordinary Mexican minister, would justify, in the eyes of all nations, immediate war."

"That remedy, however," General Jackson added, "should not be used by just and generous nations, confiding in their strength, for injuries committed, if it can be honorably avoided."

There were few important developments in the administration of Van Buren or in Harrison's one month in the presidential chair, but 1843 produced an incident of a nature with which students of recent American history are familiar. Daniel Webster, Tyler's secretary of state, resigned after having served a little more than two years.

He had been out of harmony with the president and his fellow cabinet members. In particular he had stood alone in opposing the policy of Texan annexation, which by this time had become an important issue. "However," says George Lockhart Rives, "he and President Tyler parted with mutual and evidently sincere expressions of confidence and good will." One can imagine the number of "God bless yous."

Two international questions demanded much attention in the campaign of 1844, in which James K. Polk and Henry Clay disputed the presidency. Mexico was showing a determination to contest the boundary claim of Texas and meanwhile there was a threat of war with Great Britain.

The limits of the so-called Oregon country, like those of Texas, had never been definitely fixed. England claimed territory as far south as the Columbia river, while the United States set the parallel of 54 degrees 40 minutes, passing north of Queen Charlotte island, as the boundary. Polk's party, the Democratic, coupled "the reoccupation of Oregon" with "the reannexation of Texas" and "Fifty-four-Forty or Fight!" became the campaign cry.

Badly Muddled Problem.

So Polk, like Wilson, not only fell heir to a badly muddled Mexican problem but was to be threatened with war with a nation across the Atlantic. Notes were exchanged with Great Britain, mutual concessions were made and in 1846 a treaty was drawn definitely fixing the Oregon boundary. By a suggestive coincidence the practical abandonment of the claim for the 54-40 line was contemporaneous with the start of the Mexican war. The resolution of notice to London was passed by both houses of congress April 23, 1846, and on the next day the first blood was shed in the contest with the southern republic.

The United States had formally annexed Texas March 3, 1845, the last day of Tyler's administration. Mexico had given warning that she would regard such a move as an act of war and diplomatic relations with Washington were severed at once.

William S. Parrott, an American dentist living in Mexico, abandoned the practice of his profession long enough to suggest peace terms, but Mexico repulsed his advances. Parrott was a secret agent of the United States government. In the same year John M. Slidell, a congressman from Louisiana, was sent to Mexico city as minister. He found a violent factional contest raging, with no one in authority willing to receive him, so he returned to Washington.

It was this same Slidell who years later while going as a confidential commissioner from the Confederate government to France was seized aboard the British merchant ship Trent. In a short time the United States surrendered him and James M. Mason, commissioner to England, because the neutral rights of England had been transgressed.

During the preceding winter and spring an American force commanded by Gen. Zachary Taylor had been moving westward along the Rio Grande, and late in March it halted opposite Matamoros and erected field works. The Mexican commander, General Ampudia, notified General Taylor on April 12 that he must break up camp within twenty-four hours and retire beyond the Nueces river; otherwise "arms and arms alone must decide the question." According to Mexico's persistent representations, the Nueces was the western boundary of Texas and the territory between that river and the Rio Grande was a part of the Mexican domain. Taylor consequently was regarded as an invader.

Taylor Acts Promptly.

The American general did not reply to the ultimatum. On April 24 the Mexican leader advised him that he "considered hostilities commenced and should prosecute them." Almost immediately Taylor sent a force up the Rio Grande to ascertain if Mexicans had crossed the river. This force was engaged and forced to surrender. Then the American congress authorized the president to raise a force of 50,000 men—"war existed by the act of Mexico," the preamble to the bill set forth—and on May 13 the two republics were declared to be at war.

Taylor, advancing southward, won victory after victory, the most notable resulting in the capture of Monterey, September 24, 1846. That autumn part of his army was taken from him to reenforce Gen. Winfield Scott, and Santa Anna, commanding the Mexican army, seeing his weakened condition, determined to annihilate him. He pushed northward, and Taylor, with only 5,000 men, fell back to the pass of Angostura, a narrow defile in the mountains directly in front of Buena Vista.

On the morning of Washington's birthday, 1847, Santa Anna, then within two miles of the United States troops, sent a messenger with the ultimatum:

"You are surrounded by 20,000 men and cannot avoid being cut to pieces. I wish to save you this disaster, and herewith call upon you to surrender."

Taylor's reply was characteristic in brevity and tone: "I decline to accede to your request."

For the whole of one day the battle raged fiercely. Though outnumbered, the Americans had the advantage of position and of artillery, and their batteries swept the attacking lines from the field repeatedly. During the night the Mexicans retreated. Their casualties had numbered 2,000, while the Americans lost 700 in killed and wounded. Buena Vista went a long way toward making Taylor president of the United States.

In March, 1847, Scott landed near Vera Cruz with 12,000 men. In a few days he had captured the castle and the town and soon started on the march to the capital over the roads which Cortez had taken 328 years before. He occupied Jalapa, Perote and Puebla in turn and on September 14 entered the city of Mexico.

Peace Terms Accepted.

President Polk had tried repeatedly to bring about peace. By the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo Mexico gave up the vast territory of New Mexico and California. The cession to the United States added about 1,000,000 square miles of land, with 5,000 miles of sea coast and three great harbors. The United States paid $15,000,000 to Mexico and assumed the claims of American citizens against the southern republic. Polk considered the terms of the treaty too lenient, but when he submitted the document to the senate it was ratified.

In every battle of the war the Americans were successful. The United States forces employed in the invasion aggregated about 100,000 men, this number including 26,290 regulars and 56,926 volunteers. One hundred and twenty officers and 1,400 men fell in battle or died from wounds; 100 officers and 10,800 men died of disease. Approximately 133,200 Mexicans took part in the war and their loss in killed and wounded was about 8,500.

Three men who fought against Mexico—Taylor, Pierce and Grant—became presidents of the United States. Pierce had answered the call for volunteers; Grant was a young lieutenant in the regular army, only a few years out of West Point. Many of the great leaders in the Civil war owed their pre-eminence in skill and strategy to the training received just after their baptism of fire in Mexico. Jefferson Davis, who became president of the Confederacy, was colonel at the head of a regiment of Mississippi infantry at Buena Vista, and Sherman, Thomas Bragg and Reynolds were in charge of batteries.

Curious Political Result.

The contest with Mexico had a curious political result. For the first and only time in American history an administration conducting a war which was victorious at every step steadily lost ground with the people of the country. The house of representatives which declared war in May 1846, was Democratic by a large majority. The house elected in the following November, amid the shouts of Taylor's victory at Monterey, had a decided Whig majority.

This political reverse has been ascribed to three causes—the enactment of the tariff of 1846 (there may be a tariff issue again this year) which offended some of the manufacturing interests; the receding of the administration from the ground originally taken on the Oregon boundary question, and the widespread apprehension that the war had been undertaken for the purpose of extending and perpetuating slavery.

It was the hero of the war who was elected president in 1848. Polk was not even renominated by the Democrats. Like many men since his time he had pursued an unwise course toward the Democratic organization in New York and split the party. Lewis Cass was nominated in his stead, only to be beaten by Taylor in November. Singing:

Clear the track if your toes are tender,
For Honest Zach can never surrender,

the Whigs marched to victory.

SPANISH BEAUTY

Mme. Cuadra, wife of Joaquin Cuadra, secretary of the Nicaraguan legation, and daughter of the Nicaraguan secretary of state, is one of the most attractive of Washington's diplomatic hostesses. Her beauty is of pronounced Spanish type.

GOOD ROADS

PRAISE FOR AMERICAN ROADS

Compare Very Favorably With Highways of Many European Countries —Much Work in Progress.

"We Americans are prone to overestimate and sometimes to boast of that which we have," says J. M. Linscott, New England agent for a large motor car company. "At least that is the accusation made by our European cousins. I sometimes wonder if it is just. I wonder if we do not more often underestimate our possessions and our achievements. We really are a wonderful country, you know, and with full allowance for our shortcomings, a wonderful people, too. So I rather think we are justified in some of our boastfulness. It is an attribute of youth, and evidence of a good healthy youthful enthusiasm.

"Apropos of what?" you ask.

"Well, of roads, for example.

"We are accustomed to saying that we have the worst roads in the world, and to hold up as an example of model roads the centuries-old highways of Europe.

"I have found in talking with Americans who have toured abroad that most of them will give as examples of model highways a few main traveled roads. But ask them about the general roads of any country and they will either tell you they do not know, or if perchance one has happened to lose his way and got on to one of the byways, he will admit that they are about as bad as has ever been seen in Michigan or Nebraska.

"Your traveled American will expatiate at great length on the wonderful roads of France. And they are wonderful. That is to say, some of them are. At that the total mileage of really good roads in that country is much less than most people imagine. We journeyed over cobblestone roads that would shake your teeth loose—and that in romantic Normandy, too.

"The roads in the British isles are excellent, but after all New England has more, and they are just as good, despite the climatic conditions that favor the former. The Rhine route in Germany is all that has been claimed for it, but we have our roads up the Hudson to match it—and who shall say whether the scenery on the Rhine or the Hudson is more beautiful, since both are magnificent beyond description?

"The Texas road is made of crushed sea shells, which make a perfect surface, while the Italian road is composed of powdered marble from the

Good Road in England.

great quarries of Carrara. Anyone who has traveled over this well knows he will not return that way because its beauty is deceptive. The gritty particles of marble will cut the tread off a set of tires in one trip.

"I wonder how many people realize the influence of climate on roads? I wonder how many of those who rave over the fact that the Appian Way is still in tolerable condition after more than two thousand years, have stopped to consider how long that same highway would last in Michigan, for example? The alternate freezing and thawing and heaving would disintegrate and cause it to wear away just as fast as they do our own macadam and cement construction.

"How many of those appreciate how much road-building is going on not only in their own immediate neighborhood but throughout this country.

"How many know that Michigan will build 800 miles of wonderfully good roads; that Indiana will build fully 600 miles of roads, and she already has 1,000 miles of excellent highways, which she is keeping in the pink of condition. Ohio will build fully 140 miles of roads. Some of the eastern Atlantic states—Massachusetts, Maine, New York, Pennsylvania—have thousands of miles of roads that are as fine as anything that lies under the sun. And these states are building more all the time."

Concrete Road Costly.

It costs about $13,000 to build a mile of good concrete road. This makes a road everlasting, without dust, very few repairs, and good in all kinds of weather.

Stone Houses Are Cheap.

Stone houses last much longer than wood, require no paint, therefore are much cheaper in the end.

Who Is Responsible?

Who is responsible for the bad condition of the roads?

WASHINGTON GOSSIP

Plan Aerial Mail Service for Isolated Points

WASHINGTON.—Aerial mail service to isolated points in Alaska and Massachusetts is contemplated by the post office department. Bids were asked for service on eight routes, seven of them in Alaka. October 1 is named as the date for their starting.

The routes will be established, the department announced, as much to stimulate development of aviation because of its relation to military preparedness as to improve the mail service. The department believes that efforts already begun to finance an aerial patrol of the Atlantic coast indicate ready capital will be found for the mail service undertakings.

If the service is successful, it is announced, a gradual expansion will follow the other routes where transportation is slow and inadequate.

The Massachusetts route is from New Bedford to Nantucket, 56 miles and return, partly by land and partly by water. Trips would be made 13 times a week during the summer months and six times in the winter. An aeroplane would have to be able to carry a weight limit of 3,000 pounds. The present cost of the service is $23,000 a year.

The Alaska route forms a connecting link from Seward to Nome, thence to Fairbanks and back to Valdez. Most of them call for a service twice a week throughout the year. On some of the routes the cost is as high as $100,000 a year, and in winter six weeks is required to make the trip. The aeroplane contracts allow two days for most of the trips. The longest route, Valdez to Fairbanks, is 358 miles. The extreme time limit of six weeks on some of the routes is required because mail sometimes has to be routed via Seattle.

Postmaster General Burleson has been assured, it was said, that capital already is considering bids and that estimates are being made.

Is Washington a City of Snobs and Snubs?

THIS is essentially the city of the social practitioner, of the climber, of snobs and of snubs. Everybody is trying, by hook or crook, to better his social position, which is as praiseworthy as an effort to better himself financially or physically. And yet the climber is always a joke.

A woman whose husband has a subcabinet job in the present administration and who takes herself very seriously in consequence, called up an old resident the other day with a "Good morning, Mrs. Jones. How can I get people like the Danvers to come to my parties?"

The resident lady grinned a huge grin into the telephone.

"Why, I'm sure I don't know. If you aren't acquainted with Mrs. Danvers and she doesn't make any overtures to you, I don't believe it would be possible to get her to come to your parties."

The near cabinet woman uttered an exclamation of disgust. "I'd like to know what's the good of the position we've acquired in Washington if I can't work it to get in with the kind of people I want."

A newly rich woman in town with a whole fleet of motor cars and no need of a nerve tonic breaks into many of the smartest homes by a system entirely her own.

She finds out when a motorless friend, of assured social position, however, is invited to a swagger reception or ball, to which she herself has received no card.

She coos softly over the telephone: "My dear Mrs. Jenkins, if you are going to the British embassy tonight won't you give me the pleasure of going with me in my car? I'll call for you at ten."

The motorless matron generally falls into the trap, all unsuspicious that she is making herself socially responsible for an arch schemer who has no entree.

Excuses and Honeyed Words Fall on Deaf Ears

HEREAFTER it will be a case of "Show Me" when society folk return from the fashion centers of Europe with trunks packed with all sorts of the latest creations and jewels and laces and other things, and when they face the customs house officers in New York and other ports. Excuses, honeyed words and other means of allaying the customs appraisers' doubts as to true valuations of articles subject to import duties, will fall on deaf ears after this.

It is the intention of the treasury department authorities to scrutinize closely every trunk and parcel no matter how high in the social scale their owners may be, in order to prevent smuggling and undervaluations. Every means will be used to put a stop for all time to practices particularly indulged in by wealthy society people to smuggle, or at least to bring in articles on a much lower than their true valuation.

The treasury department officials here and in New York have arrived at this decision as a result of the case of Mrs. Whitney Warren of New York, the wife of one of America's most noted architects, who is charged by customs officials with bringing in dutiable articles under "gross undervaluations," and whose case is being investigated by the New York federal grand jury.

Whether an indictment against Mrs. Warren will be found or not, Federal Attorney H. Snowden Marshal of New York has been requested by the Washington authorities to institute civil suit against Mrs. Warren for the forfeiture of the alleged undervalued goods and for the collection from her of all penalties demanded by law. The department of justice and the treasury department are pushing the case vigorously and it is expected that the investigation will be completed in a short time.

Catch Question Baffles the License Dispenser

THE office of Col. William A. Kroll, marriage license clerk, is a favorite hunting ground for "copy" and, for this reason, there generally is a news hound nosing around. This was the case the other day when a couple approached the counter and asked for two licenses, naming a different minister in each license to perform the ceremony. With the departure of the bride and bridegroom-to-be, the reporter walked over to take a look at the book. It is a common occurrence for persons desiring to be married to have two ceremonies performed, but the newspaper man determined to have some fun with the colonel.

"Hey, colonel, you've made a mistake," he said. "Here are two licenses, calling for two marriage ceremonies for the same couple. In each case you have the license issued to the same persons."

"What's the matter with that?"

It was explained that, no matter which ceremony was performed first when the second ceremony was to be performed, the persons married would have been married once already, and that, therefore, the record of the license issued for the second ceremony was incorrect, in that it stated that both of the contracting parties had never been married before and that they were Miss —— and Mr. ——, where as the record should have read Mr. and Mrs. ——.

The colonel is still wondering whether or not he made a mistake. Others at the city hall have taken up the question, and as they are hopelessly divided over the facts in the case it is possible Chief Justice Covington may be asked, in one of his few spare moments, to settle the argument.